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REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration. Claims 1-5, 14, 15, 23, 28, 38, 49, 53, 55, 56, 62, and 77-79 were previously pending in this application. By this amendment, Applicants are canceling claims 1-5, 14, 15, 53, 55, 56, 62, 77, and 78 without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants reserve the right to file one or more divisional or continuation applications directed to the canceled subject matter. Claims 23, 28, 38, 49, and 79 have been amended. New dependent claims 80-84 have been added. As a result, claims 23, 28, 38, 49, and 79-84 are pending for examination with claims 23, 28, 38, 49, and 79 being independent claims. No new matter has been added.

Applicants would like to thank Examiner Beisner for his courtesies during a telephonic interview with Neil Ferraro and Shannon Pratt on November 24, 2004. Removing the "generally U-shaped" limitation from the allowable claims was discussed. The Examiner indicated preliminarily that with this broadening amendment to the allowable claims would still distinguish over the prior art, and suggested that the Applicants submit these claim amendments for further consideration.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants acknowledge the Examiner's finding that claims 23, 28, 38, and 49 are allowed and claim 79 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of their base claims and any intervening claims. Claim 79 has been amended to be rewritten in independent form. Claims 23, 28, 38, 49, and 79 have been broadened to remove the "generally U-shaped" limitation. Applicants believe that these amended claims continue to distinguish over the prior art. Applicants have added new dependent claims 80-84 to further recite the "generally U-shaped" limitation.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102/103

In the Office Action, claims 1-5, 14, 15, 53, 55, 56, 62, 77, and 78 are either rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Satake (JP 02-280823), anticipated by Oishi (JP 02-42974), anticipated by Hitachi (JP 04-126068), and/or as being unpatentable over Kuriyama (U.S. Patent No. 5,728,577) in view of Hitachi (JP 04-126068 or Schenck (U.S. Patent No. 6,245,236).

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Without acceding to the propriety of the Examiner's positions, Applicants have canceled claims 1-5, 14, 15, 53, 55, 56, 62, 77, and 78 to expedite prosecution and place this application in condition for allowance.

Accordingly, withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

A Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. The Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at the telephone number listed below if this communication does not place the case in condition for allowance.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicant hereby requests any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 23/2825.

Respectfully submitted,

By:

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